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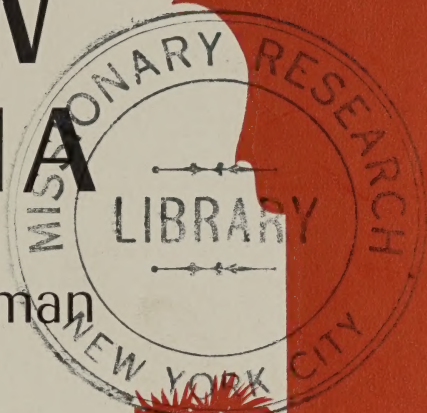
Ksiding, Andrew

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I SAW INDIA

By A Layman



**BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
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Part of the India scene

"What went ye out for to see?" That is the word of Scripture with which Andrew Keiding, Lutheran layman of Milwaukee, began the narrative of his visit to India. With his wife, he toured the Mission area. He was thrilled by what he saw and heard. This booklet tells the story in his own words.

I SAW INDIA

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Keiding gave a contribution for the building of a dispensary at Ankalaya-gudem, near Rajahmundry, and traveled to India for the dedication.

"WHAT WENT YE OUT FOR TO SEE?"

What should we go to India for? The question was put to us more than once and it was not an easy one to answer—at first. But when, near the end of our trip, we had to give an answer to a group of our missionaries, we told them that we had come to India just in order to have a good

But we also came to see. And see we did. Having invested some money to have a small hospital or dispensary built in some out-of-the-way locality, we had to look after our investment. And what finally made us undertake this extended journey was that a very good friend of ours, Pastor R. B. Reed



Dr. Virgil Zigler, Mrs. Andrew Keiding, Mr. Andrew Keiding, Rev. G. Samuel, Missionary W. T. Benze, Hindu village-headman

time. And a grand and glorious time we had, being treated as kings by missionaries and Indians alike, from the morning we landed in Calcutta on February 5 until the evening we took off for the journey home to Milwaukee on February 28. 1949

of Red Wing, Minnesota, told us that we had to go in order to stimulate and encourage the missionaries on the field, proving by our presence that people are sincerely interested in Foreign Missions. In the end, we received more than the missionaries.

On February 5 we landed in Calcutta where we were met by Dr. Strock, almost 67 years old and full of boundless energy. Here we also had our first glimpse of India—dirt, beggars, buffaloes, coolies, rickshaws, automobiles, bicycles, and crowds of people in one great conglomeration. We were one whole day late and had no time to go sightseeing in Calcutta, so all three of us left the same night for Darjeeling in the Himalaya Mountains. We were very fortunate to have beautiful clear weather so we were able to see the sunrise over the second highest mountain in the world, the Kinchinjunga, well over 28,000 feet. We flew back to Calcutta and barely made the train for Ranchi in Bihar Province, some 200 miles west of Calcutta. We had to travel by train at night. Dr. Strock had secured a first-class compartment for us, which meant that we had a sleeper. This

does not necessarily mean that we slept. You have to bring along your own bedding, and the Strocks had provided for all three of us. Windows and doors must be locked securely in order to keep out unwelcome guests.

You are not tempted to steal anything that can be removed by help of a screwdriver or any other handy tool; it has been stolen already. The dinner was secured from waiters on the platform and Dr. Strock had to argue with them about the price. They got two-thirds of what they asked and said, "Thank you."

Early the next morning we arrived at a station where we got off to take the bus for Ranchi. While we had a cup of tea, Mrs. Keiding called my attention to a very pretty little baby held by his mother. I was not supposed to look at the baby but at the diamonds the mother had in her nose.

WELCOMED BY GOSSNER CHURCH

Now we really don't know if Dr. Strock deserves to be forgiven, because this giant among our missionaries had not given us the slightest hint of what was in store for us. We arrived at Ranchi about 8.00 A.M. and were accorded a welcome no mere tourist will ever receive. When we drove inside the compound and arrived at the road leading up to the bungalow occupied by the Strocks, we found both sides of the drive lined with people, and the entrance gaily decorated with flowers. As a first token of welcome, our hands were washed with lukewarm water which one of

the ladies poured over them while another afterwards dried them with a towel. Garlands of fresh flowers were hung around our necks. The president of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church read us an address of welcome. Choirs from the seminary and the high schools were singing. All the officials were there to greet us, and we felt so small that any little hole would have been too large for us to hide in.

To understand the situation right, it must be said here that Dr. Strock had been loaned to the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church as they needed

an experienced missionary to teach in the seminary and to help improve the organization of the church. The Gossner Church, as an "orphaned mission," receives a substantial grant from Lutheran World Action, some \$30,000, without which it could not function at all. There are in this church body about 175,000 Christians, many of whom are very poor. Thus we saw Lutheran World Action in action.

After breakfast we were taken all over the compound to inspect the various activities such as grade schools, high schools, training schools, the seminary, the large old church, and the printing office and shop. A quick lunch, and no rest, and we were off again, this time to visit an old village church with a correspondingly old congregation. More surprises! Here people met us outside the village and came with a number of large banners flying. There were more hand washings, and singing, garlands, and decorations. An old patriarch came on a horse, and we were thus conducted to the church. In no time the church was full; there must have been 250 people of all ages. They all sat on the floor, the children in front, forming a semi-circle around us and just staring at us. The singing started; but most of them cannot read. So one man with a hymnbook stood up and read one stanza aloud, and then they all sang. Again he read a stanza and they all joined in the singing. Still they were not satisfied, and clamored for a certain man to come up from the rear. He had his long drum along, and

when he sat down and commenced to beat out the time on this instrument, the singing went much better. And they do sing well. There were lots of speeches which we did not understand except one or two in English, and then we were given a nod and we had to get up and speak—through an interpreter. Finally the service came to an end, and young and old must shake hands with the visitors. As you shake hands you must say "Yishusahay," meaning something like "May Jesus be your helper." This is not so bad when there are only 250 people or so, but when it comes to between seven and eight hundred, as it was the following day, your tongue is nearly paralyzed after the ordeal. Your hand and arm feel it too.

We stayed in Ranchi for two and a half days and had many heart-warming experiences. Mrs. Keiding counted our garlands—121. When we went to the station to leave for Calcutta, the seminary choir was there and sang for us again. So short a time, so many new friends, and so difficult to part. But we all felt the joy of knowing that we only part for a brief time, and then we shall meet again—above.

Dr. Strock accompanied us to Calcutta to see us on the right train for the South. We had been carried on hands like babies so far, but now we were allowed to travel alone for the next 25 hours. Our destination was Rajahmundry on the Godavari River. And on Saturday afternoon, February 12, we were met at the station by "the beloved physician," Dr. Zigler.

\$3000 established a dispensary in India; \$500 will build a village church; visual equipment items are from \$65 to \$250. Similar projects in other countries await the generous donor.



The village band welcomes visitors and performs at weddings

WEEK-END SLIGHTLY PRIMITIVE

Bright and early Tuesday morning, February 15, we left Rajahmundry to attend the dedication of the dispensary at Ankalayagudem. We had been working up gradually to this main event of our visit. Our generous hosts, Dr. and Mrs. Zigler, had anticipated our need for some rest and had arranged an easy week-end for us. Saturday afternoon we were allowed just to visit the Ziglers. Yet we had the pleasure of meeting Rev. W. T. Benze from Vegeswarapuram, who dropped in to say hello. Other visitors were several nice small toads enjoying themselves on the slate floor and some color-changing chameleons scamper-

ing over the walls. We were told that these were just nice house pets to have around. They were after the mosquitoes.

But I promised myself to inspect our bathtub for toads, and sure enough, there was one peeping out of the drain pipe. Did I say bathtub? I didn't mean that. There is none. But what there is instead is fully as pleasant. What is afforded you is a corner of the bathroom, 4 ft. x 3 ft. The two sides are the walls; one side is a solid concrete stand about $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high and $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide and 3 ft. long. There you have your wash basin and other necessities for your bath. The fourth side

is only 4 to 6 inches high. Here is where you enter your "bathtub." Running water? Maybe. In Rajahmundry we had running cold water. Hot water is provided by the water-man who previously has filled the hot water container. As a rule there is also a large pail with cold water. One never knows when the power fails or the pump breaks down. Most of the cities have no water system or electricity. Some of the hospitals provide these essentials themselves. Some have neither, and that makes it hard and difficult for our doctors and nurses on the field. And still they manage to get along smiling, while most of us would growl. You bathe Indian style, sitting on your haunches, and as a grand finale you take the basin in both hands and pour its contents down your back. The toads don't do you any harm. But look out for scorpions! They are mean.

Refreshed by sleep, we had Sunday morning breakfast and devotions with the Ziglers and then a tour through the hospital. Somehow I felt guilty. I was not duly impressed by what I saw. Later on it dawned upon me that I was depressed by all the things I did not see, things which could be supplied if only we, here at home—well you know what I mean! And then both Mrs. Keiding and I marveled at the cheerfulness with which our doctors and nurses and missionaries go about their daily tasks and accomplish wonders with the meager means at their command. And still they plan ahead, start new buildings and new activities. They live in Hope, they live by Faith, and their daily bread is Love.

"Does Mrs. Keiding teach Sunday school?"

"Certainly."

"That's fine! You speak to our Sunday school this afternoon."

And so she did, and all those pretty dark eyes were glued upon her. In the evening we all attended English service in the big church in some other part of the city. Here Dr. Coleman from Luthergiri Seminary preached the sermon. And—bless him!—he spoke quietly enough in a low pleasing voice so I, having left only 30 per cent of my hearing, was able to follow him and get the message of justice by law and justice by love. In the middle of the sermon the lights went out which didn't seem to annoy Dr. Coleman, this being a rather common occurrence. I thought of Dr. Zigler and his operating room. Someone provided a candle and two lanterns, and then the lights came on again. After the service, we were introduced to a host of missionaries, and we began to wonder where they all came from.

Monday we visited various schools, the seminary, and the T. B. sanatorium. A good rest in the afternoon, and a big dinner at the Zigler home in the evening! Do the missionaries have parties? They love them, just as you and I. And they need recreation even more than you and I. And here was a special occasion—visitors from home. The ladies wore very pretty dresses and the men were gentlemen, indeed! Guests numbered about 25. The food was excellent. There were speeches and songs, and a very enjoyable time was had by all. I was seated next to Miss Onsrud and recalled that I was present at her commissioning in Redeemer Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And over there at other tables were Rev. and Mrs. Bill Wicklund, both having attended St. Olaf College

together with my daughter. And there was Miss Blair with whom I conversed in Danish to the great astonishment of those present. The world is so small!

And at the close of this memorable evening all were admonished to have petrol in their cars for the trip to Ankalayagudem next morning.



Village-Headman, who donated the site, is talking with Pastor Benze. The Dispensary is seen in the background

MOTORCADE THROUGH RICE FIELDS

So on February 15, 1949, early in the morning, we left for Ankalayagudem together with a number of the missionaries, Indian pastors, nurses, and others interested in the work. Dr. Zigler was in charge of this expedition, and there were people enough to fill the six or seven automobiles. Mrs. Keiding and I had met most of them at the Valentine party the evening before. We crossed the Godavari River over four successive dams, the first of which is a mile long, and drove alongside this broad stream for a while before we turned in among the many villages, rice "paddies," and tobacco fields. In the early forenoon we arrived

at Vegeswarapuram where we were welcomed by Rev. and Mrs. W. T. Benze. The entire party was served refreshments, and later we had our morning devotion together. Here we were joined by more people, so it was quite a large crowd that arrived at Ankalayagudem at about 11:30 A.M., all of us in a very festive spirit.

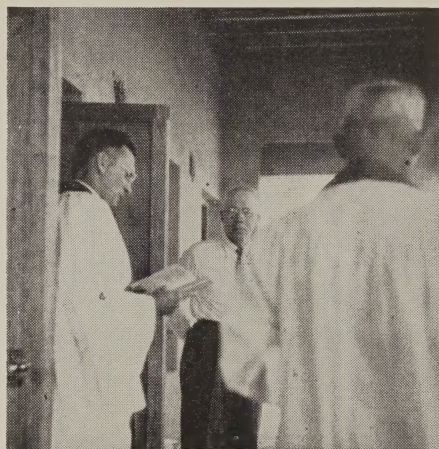
We were pleased to find that the dispensary building, though not quite finished, was larger than we had expected. It was, I must confess, a peculiar sensation to see the concrete results of what we had been working for and praying for. But there it was and here we were! In this backward

region, it is difficult to obtain proper building materials. The bricks have to be made on the spot. The man who has done the actual work, supervising the erecting of the building, is an Indian compounder, Mr. William M. Cole. I wonder if Mr. Cole could ever have accomplished what he did had it not been for his deep Christian faith and love. Very often Mr. Cole is so sick from malaria that he is unable to

do anything. Recently, he also had pneumonia. Mr. Cole was sick and unable to attend when we came; and Dr. Zigler had to give him injections before he could show himself. Many people suffer from malaria, many of our missionaries, too; and in that particular region it is bad. It is our hope that the dispensary may be of help to those people, especially to the hill tribes who inhabit this region.

DISPENSARY DEDICATED

Upon arriving we were immediately taken to the residence of the local Indian pastor and told just to sit still. We were king and queen for a day. Please don't misunderstand me. Kings and queens are not what they used to be. Once upon a time they could rule. But now, alas, they must do as told, and do it promptly—that's safer. So first we were taken out to be photographed. And then we were seated in the front row facing the building. A temporary shelter had been erected for this occasion so people could sit in the shade. When you visit India, stay out of the sun, and don't drink ice water. Not being careful caused me plenty of grief. I was given a key and told to be ready so, when the sign was given me, I could go up and open the main door of the dispensary. Dr. Moyer officiated, together with one of the Indian pastors. There were songs by various groups, Scripture readings, and prayers—all in Telugu, of which Mrs. Keiding and I understood nothing. At the proper moment I was given a nod and I went up to the door and unlocked it. One of the keys was given me by



Dr. Henry H. Moyer officiated at the dedication

Mr. Cole as a souvenir. Mrs. Keiding and I behaved as king and queen, whose main function is to be stared at and still smile and look benevolent. And how those children can stare!

The dedication service over, the festivities began. The chairman was a high-caste Hindu, chief engineer for a great project to dam the Godavari River, a project greater than Boulder Dam. There were government officials and even a representative of the British Government. And now they came

with flower garlands. And there were speeches, some in English, others in Telugu, and still others in the dialect of the hill tribes. We had, both of us, to speak briefly. There were more songs and more picture-taking; and now we could finally have lunch. We ate, together with the missionaries, in the main room of the dispensary, and sat at a table and had dishes. The Indians felt much more comfortable by following their own style and custom by sitting on the floor of the porch and eating with their fingers from large leaves. We were told that three Brahmins ate together with the rest of us—the first time they had done such a

thing in their lives. We felt quite honored.

And then there were beggars. Missionaries advised us not to give to them as it only encourages one of the great old evils of India. But I could not resist a little fellow who sang “Pistol Packing Mamma.” That happened at a railway station on our journey.

After lunch, Dr. Zigler introduced us to several high-caste ladies so we could get an opportunity to see the amount of solid gold ornaments they were wearing. We estimated that one of them was carrying enough gold on herself to pay for the dispensary several times over.

DANCE, FIVE RUPEES

At last we were off again; but this time, instead of returning to Rajahmundry, we and some of the missionaries and some others headed toward the forest where the hill tribes live. Pastor Benze had arranged for us to be able to spend one night in a forest bungalow. We arrived at our destination late in the afternoon and soon after prepared for supper and an early retiring after a strenuous day. Dr. Zigler saw to it that we all got our malaria pills. Mrs. Keiding and I were treated to having army cots to sleep on. We also had the honor of having mosquito nets. The others slept on the floor, in hammocks, and in the cars.

I was soon asleep, but my dear wife awoke me, crying: “They are coming; they are coming!” “Well,” I said, “who are coming?” “The Hill Tribes; they are going to dance for us.” A few necessary pieces of clothing were hurled at me and both of us were out

on the porch in no time. There the missionaries forced us down into some chairs, since we were guests of honor. It was pitch dark; but now we could see torches and could hear the drums. And here they came, some of the men wearing fantastic headgear with buffalo horns, and beating their long drums at both ends. There was nothing wild about these dances, and each had a specific meaning. They kept it up for two full hours until we finally told them to go home. Pastor Benze paid them 5 rupees and they were satisfied. But I kept wondering how one of our missionaries would write on his expense account: Dance—5 rupees.

The next morning none of us suffered any ill effects except Mr. Cole, who again was in the throes of an attack of malaria. Several of the party then went down to the village and took movies. We saw how the people lived there; and we saw the small

children with big, blown-up abdomens, due to undernourishment. But it was so wonderful to see how willingly these children came to Dr. Zigler when he wanted to examine them. And for Mrs. Keiding and myself it was another great experience, because these are the people we would love to

help and win for Christ through the work at the dispensary.

Then back to Vegeswarapuram with Pastor Benze. When Mrs. Benze, who had had two blowouts on her way home, finally arrived with the cook, we had supper and a good night's rest and were ready for new conquests.

BRIGHT AND EARLY

"Bright and early" seems to be the word for missionaries. They have to start early every day and they are always bright about it. They love their work. A typical example is Miss Hazel Naugle who called "bright and early" at the Vegeswarapuram bungalow to drive us to Bhimavaram. She has 150 girls in her boarding hostel and conducts Bethany School with ten teachers in her charge. She supervises 43 Bible women in a territory about the size of Palestine.

At Bhimavaram we were placed in the hands of Rev. and Mrs. Paul Holmer, the latter born in India of missionary parents. In the busy hum of missionary activity, we visited the Mission High School, the boys' hostel, Bethany School for Girls, and the Augustana Hospital. Late in the afternoon we started out on a very important mission—to visit the church at Anakoder, built by the help of our church in Milwaukee and partly supported by our Sunday school. When I found I had no film for this important event, Pastor Holmer immediately loaned me his camera and the hundred feet of film in it. The missionaries seemed to follow the Scripture, "They had all things in common." We were using sleeping bags supplied by the Strocks, sun helmets picked up



The author—enthusiastic admirer of missionary work and missionaries

among missionaries in Rajahmundry, and were taking home a whole collection of carved ivory figures given us at cost by a missionary who said she could gather another set, which we had no time to do. Missionaries often use the furniture and equipment of fellow workers home on furlough.

Bhimavaram is in the canal and irrigation country. Traveling to Anakoder was a harrowing drive on a narrow dyke, especially precarious when we had to pass another car or an oxcart. Later, we were transferred to an ox-



St. Paul's, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sponsored this chapel at Anakoder in the Bhimavaram district. The building was not quite finished when this picture of the congregation was taken

cart which went right through a small body of water ahead of us and then continued on a narrow dyke with water on both sides. The cart would sometimes lurch dangerously to one side or the other, but our friends assured us there was no danger of turning over as the wheels were spread on a wide beam. The road finally wound up in a field, and then we could see the church in the distance.

People quickly appeared and led us to the village where the whole population turned out to welcome us.

It was beginning to get dark, and everybody went into the church which was filled up in no time at all. It held a great many people because there were no seats and everybody sat on the floor, which is the regular fashion in the Indian village. A lone kerosene lantern gave a dim light up in front.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Out there in the little village church, filled with people one cannot even see because of the darkness, the Confession grows upon one—"I believe in the Communion of Saints." Prayers were offered and an address of greeting was read. We responded, and delivered the special greeting from our Pastor and one from our church and Sunday school at home. Then we closed with prayers and the benediction. It was a dark night outside, but the stars were beautiful. The welcoming committee saw us safely back

to the village where we had transferred from car to cart. Here we had to stop again for prayer. It was this way wherever we went—this craving for the Bread of Life, this feeling of being one in Christ, this realization of the Communion of Saints.

"Bright and early" next morning, we took the train for Rajahmundry. At the Industrial Home, Miss Kaercher asked if I would allow one or two women to try on my hearing aid. Of course I would! Then we saw their faces light up; we saw two people

transformed in appearance by being brought back again briefly into the world of sound. It hurt me that I could not leave my hearing aid with them. Even if I could have done so, who would service it for them? Places to visit made us dizzy with interest.

There were the Hospital, Swenson Industrial Home, Schade Girl's School, Lutherigiri Seminary, Teachers' Training School, The Reading Room and Dispensary. After seeing many people and many kinds of useful missionary work, we left by train for Chirala.

HOW ROMANTIC!

There was no electricity in Chirala. At the hospital, the Diesel motored pump had broken, and coolies, carrying water pots, were supplying this 125-bed institution. A big busy hospital and no electricity! The only way an institution like this, out in the rural areas, can have electricity is by establishing its own power plant. If only someone—well, it would cost about \$9,000 for complete electrification. Here at home, we think of our missionaries working without benefit of the modern devices to which we are accustomed, and we think of how romantic it is. We ought to reverse this perverted way of thinking and provide our missionaries with better equipment, even though they are surrounded by somewhat primitive conditions. Missionaries do not ask for things for themselves. In their letters they say, "Please remember us before the Throne of Grace." Besides praying for them, we ought to supply efficient equipment for their work. Is it not a fact that the congregation which is most faithful in missionary work is always blessed with the greatest success in its work at home?

In Tenali we visited Dr. Dunkelberger who took us to a Communion Service in a congregation of high caste people who worship in a house which they have purchased. We received the



The rural mailman carries the mail on his head and a spear in his hand—badge of office and useful in jungle emergency. Read Kipling's poem about the mail runner

Sacrament with the congregation. We did not understand one word, and yet it was the most sacred moment during our entire stay in India. From Tenali, to Guntur, to Rentichintala, we covered a large territory and saw many phases of varied missionary activities, stopping en route to call at Sattena-

palle and Narasaravupet. We had hunting equipment on this trip and stopped several times so that Dr. Dunkelberger, experienced hunter, and I could make an attempt to hunt for wild geese and later for deer. The geese and deer got far out of our reach before we could fire a shot. One of us made too much noise!

The School for the Blind at Renti-chintala is a Mission work to open the eyes of the most casual westerner. Everyone must see that the pupils and teachers here all live in their knowledge of the blessing of God. The Boys' and Girls' Boarding Schools, the hostels connected with them, the Renti-chintala Hospital, and a beautiful church built of marble were a part of our sightseeing tour at this station.

The stone is quarried near by and is therefore quite inexpensive.

Back in Guntur, we saw the Stall Girls' School, Andhra Christian College, Kugler Hospital, the Industrial Schools, and Training Schools. It was impressive to see so many young people in our schools. The number reaches into several thousand. Through the help of an Indian motor car driver, I had opportunity to get a motion picture of an outdoor laundry. These are all outdoors in India. The washermen use a pond or a stream or a well. They dip pieces of clothing into water and then pound them on a flat rock. They get the clothes white even though they spread them out on the ground to dry. The Indian sun cleanses and bleaches.

FAREWELL, INDIA!

A happy farewell dinner party at the Stall School bungalow, brought a large missionary group together to congratulate the Swavelys on their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, to say good-by to Mrs. Finefrock, leaving on her final trip to America, and to give good wishes to the Keidings soon to leave on their way home. We have often been asked: "What do the missionaries look like?" "Are they happy in their work?" "How do they live?" "What do they eat?" We have learned that the best way to get the answer is to go and see for yourself. You shall never regret it.

Mrs. Keiding and I are but human and we, in turn, wanted to know what the missionaries thought of us. We didn't have to ask; we found out all right. We were sitting in the office of Dr. Wood in Guntur together with Dr. and Mrs. Wood. The mail came in, and some personal letters were delivered to Mrs. Wood. They were from some other lady missionaries, and they contained the topic for the day, the visit of the Keidings. "And here is one more," said Mrs. Wood; "look at this." And this is what we read: "... And the Keidings have just been here; we all think they are real cute."



Farming people are the strength of India. The Andhra Church has its greatest numbers among the rural classes.

